

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
6 September 1985

BOOKS - 'DAINTY MORALISTS' DRAW ASIDE THE SKIRTS: HUNT
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Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt, who is making a living these days writing spy novels, thinks people who feel intelligence operatives should be gentlemen are "dainty moralists."

Asked if agents representing the United States should employ the same methods as their Soviet counterparts, Hunt replied:

"That's the way it should be. There are so many dainty moralists, so many with access to newspaper columns, TV and radio editorials and so forth, that combat has become a dirty word.

"(They say) you are equating yourself with a vicious enemy. There is this very pristine drawing aside of the skirts. They say, 'Oh, we mustn't be like our enemy. We would lose, my goodness, all our principles.' I don't think that cooks. It didn't cook in Vietnam, God knows. It never cooks in the clandestine war that continues between the two superpowers."

Hunt's comments were made in an interview in conjunction with his latest novel, "The Kremlin Conspiracy" (Stein and Day, 336 pp., \$15.95).

The theme is a confrontation between the dirty tricks boys of the Soviet and American intelligence establishments.

The centerpiece is an attempt by the Soviets to win the Nobel Peace Prize for a West German diplomat who is on their payroll.

The lesson of this espionage thriller might well be to fight fire with fire.

Hunt, a resident of Miami whose contact with the agency is restricted to the CIA retirees newsletter and periodic correspondence to get approval for his writing, said America is losing the espionage war with the Soviets.

He said Russia has been waging a single-minded campaign against capitalism and particularly America for 70 years.

"We are hardly competitive," Hunt said, noting the recent rash of espionage disasters for the West.

"(The Walker case) has the ramifications of a major GRU (Russian military intelligence) acquisition. There is a laxity in the service in protecting our secrets. It indicates how pitifully inadequate and unprepared the FBI is to counterpenetrate these clandestine activities of the KGB and the GRU."

"I'm simply talking about let's have an end to the rash civil libertarian lawsuits, which keep everybody out of prison who ought to be there, including foreign terrorists. You know how it goes. These storefront lawyers mysteriously appear and suddenly the terrorists are back out on the street. You have to blame Congress for this. Congress makes the laws. We see now a president who hasn't been awfully successful in Congress in his second term.

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'It's a given that we have to have a intelligence bulwark if our country is to stay free and functional. How we achieve that is a matter of the most intense debate that has been going on for 10 or 11 years. I don't know what the outcome will be but I can't be sanguine about it.'

Hunt complained that constraints have been placed on the CIA that make it difficult for the agency to do its job.

He said 'terrible things' have happened to Americans at home and abroad from terrorists and 'we get rhetoric from the top levels of the government about how 'This ain't going to happen no more. Boy, let me at them next time.'

'And, the next time comes and nothing happens. So then the question, almost in desperation, is 'Can't the CIA do something about this?' That's a legitimate question, but we have a self-defeating situation in Washington today.'

Hunt said on the one hand there is a good deal of interest in protecting the United States and its citizens from terrorist attack and on the other 'there is the baying insistence on full civil liberties for all of us, including strangers and foreigners who arrive on our shores with evil intent.

'There has to be some sort of concession made between total liberty and a sort of total defeat. We have got to cherish our liberties a little less if we are going to enjoy our lives a little more. By that I'm not talking about a Facist state by imputation, inclination or anything else.'